Working with workshops

A workbook for effective, engaging workshops with guidelines, tips and resources from ALTC Fellows, project teams and the literature

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*Every workshop is different*

*People are the most important element of successful workshops*

*Workshops are stories written by all involved*
Contributors

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1. Introduction

What is a workshop?

A workshop can mean many things. In this resource a workshop refers to interactive, usually one-off, intensive, face-to-face\(^1\), educational initiatives that require input from all present and result in benefits for both participants and facilitators.\(^2\)

A workshop is often a key aspect of project consultation, collaboration and engagement between the project holders and potential adopters (McKenzie et al. 2005, p. 2).

In ALTC Fellowships and projects, workshops are also part of a strategy to support the dissemination of project outcomes that is designed to maximise their impact on practice (McKenzie et al. 2005). ALTC Fellows and project holders may be conceived as innovators, change agents and early adopters seeking to ultimately engage the mainstream in new practices. Impact is more likely when change in learning and teaching practices is perceived as advantageous, compatible with people’s experiences and needs, easy to understand and apply, potentially able to be trialled, and resulting in observable improvement.\(^3\)

*Workshops must not be show and tell.* (Adrian Lee)

*Workshops should not be unidirectional. They are not about the disseminator telling the converted what they should do!* (Elton 2003)

*Workshops should never be information dumps.* (Johnson-Bailey et al. 1997)

Who is this resource for?

This resource is primarily intended for ALTC Fellows and project holders who are considering how they might use workshops within a project to support the achievement of project outcomes. However, the suggestions that follow are relevant to seminars, plenary meetings, colloquia, learning circles and other dissemination strategies that seek to engage stakeholders *interactively* in order to build and support change practices in learning and teaching.

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\(^{1}\) The reader might wish to consider whether aspects of what is written here can be applied/adapted to 'virtual workshops'. Technologically mediated workshops allow participation from anywhere on earth in ways that can enrich the workshop experience by involving individuals with quite different backgrounds and experiences.

\(^{2}\) Because the term workshop is often used interchangeably with terms such as seminars, colloquia and fora, participants at a workshop may arrive with varying expectations as to their role in the workshop and the role of project team members. For this reason, it is important to clarify the purpose and nature of the workshop at the start!

\(^{3}\) For a wonderful discussion on this and the ‘amoeba of change’, see Atkisson (1991).
How was this resource developed?

This resource was commissioned by Dr Elizabeth McDonald, in response to a request from the ALTC Fellows. It is informed by interviews with colleagues involved in multiple ways with ALTC.

In order to develop the resource, 17 ALTC Fellows, project leaders and experts in workshop facilitation were interviewed and consulted. Their experience in facilitating workshops as part of their projects and particularly their practical advice was recorded. I was particularly keen to share their views on what workshops could and could not achieve within their project goals, their personal approaches to workshop design, facilitation and development, and what they had learned from their experiences of facilitating a workshop within their project. Interviewees were most generous in sharing their approaches and insights.

These interviews together with the relevant literature and my experience over many years of facilitating workshops (not always successfully!) form the basis of this living resource.

The workbook is designed so that for each section there is space for you/your project team to consider your answers to the key questions posed. Where possible, links to relevant brief readings are included. The resource is designed around a ‘question-based’ approach to planning workshops that acknowledges the unique character of every workshop (Sork 1984).

In some instances, the views expressed may appear to be in conflict but this reflects the diversity of approaches amongst project facilitators and project goals.

Workshop planning and facilitation is an inherently messy business. What emerges on the day cannot be totally predicted and the dynamics that unfold during the process require negotiation between all involved. Unfortunately many Cookbook approaches ignore this ‘human but exciting’ element of workshops.

This resource is intended to reflect ALTC values of excellence, inclusiveness, diversity, collaboration, and commitment to long-term systemic change.
How should this resource be used?

Theories don’t plan workshops – people do. (Forester 1989)

This resource is not a textbook. The nature and effectiveness of a workshop is dependent on its ownership by the participants and project team together. Like repeat lectures, no two workshops are the same even if the design is held constant.

Each facilitator has particular approaches, strategies, strengths, and ways of engaging. Different elements of this resource will resonate differently with each reader, and they should be used in ways that are meaningful in the given context. We need to be ourselves in designing, facilitating and evaluating our workshop, as the most important element of an effective workshop is the authenticity of the facilitators. (Sue Morris)

Using this resource, you can walk through the phases of workshop design and apply these to your project as a project team, consider tips (and traps to avoid), and identify the role that each member of a project team intends to play before, during and after your workshop(s). Throughout are key ideas relevant to each phase of a workshop, more detailed explanations, and examples from actual ALTC projects.

The icons below will aid you in reading and using the document:

This icon indicates where you may wish to apply the material to your project.

Wherever this icon appears, please go to The Cookbook, which is the final section of this workbook. The Cookbook contains pro-forma checklists which can be completed when planning, evaluating, and reflecting on a workshop.
2. Why include a workshop?

Purposes of a workshop: Will a workshop help in achieving your project goals?

Workshops that resulted in the development of significant project outcomes:

Bioassess project
In this project, examples of effective assessment practices in the biological sciences were, in part, gained through roundtable discussion and national seminars.
(Kerri Lee-Harris).

ePortofolio project
Led by Gillian Hallam, the goals of this exploratory project included:

- Analysis of how ePortfolios were being used both nationally and internationally.
- Identification of exemplary practice and strategic and practical guidance to their use.
- Identification of significant issues in relation to their development [and] use.
- Consideration of the impact of ePortfolios on student learning.
- Support of the establishment of Communities of Practice amongst those incorporating the use of ePortfolios in some form.

It was critical that all participants and stakeholders’ experiences and views were heard during the ePortfolio forum, even if they were not currently actively involved with ePortfolio use.
(Gillian Hallam).

Purposes of a workshop may include:

- **Gaining diverse views, expertise, and knowledge** from workshop participants that will inform project direction and outcomes including the resources developed through the project.
- **Improving learning and teaching practices** through involving those likely to lead and/or implement outcomes.
- **Building the capacity and skills** of both participants and project team members.
- **Providing an opportunity for people to share**, in order to have a sense of agency and see value in the project for themselves professionally (and possibly personally).

Determining the purposes of a workshop may be an important initial piece of work that the project team as a whole needs to thrash-out.

**Gaining diverse views, expertise, and knowledge**

It is important to invite participants who are representative of diverse perspectives.

*We had something useful to tell them and they had useful things to tell us about how the project should develop. Participants develop a sense of ownership of project outcomes when their views and experiences are explicitly incorporated into the project. Participants provided excellent ideas on how the project could progress; there were some surprises whilst others comments confirmed what we were doing.* (Greg Battye)
Doing Group Assessment in Media and Communication

Led by Greg Battye, a workshop was held near the end of the project in order to provide the project team with feedback on the interim design of the website itself.

In essence, workshop participants were given access to the interim project website in advance of the workshop and at the workshop the project team explained what they had set out to do through the website and how they had developed the website. The purpose of the workshop was to enable participants to provide feedback to the team to further improve the website. The participants challenged the metaphor behind the website that had resulted in video footage of both academic teachers and students being well hidden on the site. We totally changed the website in response to this feedback. This was enormously useful for the project team as the group was stuck in a plan for the website and, understandably, couldn’t see the wood [for] the trees.

(Greg Battye)

Improving learning & teaching practice

Adaptation and implementation is more likely if those who (it is hoped) will implement the changes/improvements to learning and teaching in the discipline or more broadly are involved throughout the project.

Genuine participation in the development of changes in learning and teaching practice, avoids the ‘not invented here’ rejection of adaptation.

Improving practice implies change in current practice. Lewin’s 1951 model for understanding change is a useful tool for thinking about workshops as a mechanism for change. Lewin suggests that we need to experience the discomfort of discovering that current ways of working (teaching) are not as effective as possible, before we will be able to attempt new ways of working/teaching and that support is needed to work through this phase.

LEWIN’S MODEL OF CHANGE

4 Fox in Sork (1984)
Workshops where change in educational practice was a desired outcome:

**Bridging gaps in music teacher education**
Near the completion of this project a workshop was held for international music educators with the overall aim of demonstrating to music educators the relevance of the project (and its website) to their own practice.

In this project music educators contributed ‘authentic’ music education problems to the project website which was designed so that music teachers of the future could learn from real contexts. Current teachers could learn from each other, through the sharing of practice and issues and possible responses to these issues.

However, as the project leader noted: *Putting your project [website] out there for colleagues to comment on in a workshop could be a nerve wracking!* (Julie Ballantyne)

**Developing multi-level leadership in the use of student feedback to enhance student learning and teaching practice**
*Multiple teaching team fora and leadership plenaries held during the project built participant skills in the identification of and response to issues realised through student feedback in core units.* (Kate Westberg)

**Teaching-Research Nexus (TRN) project**
The purposes of the interactive seminars in this project included raising awareness and interaction between participants of TRN issues and solutions in a broader sense and to encourage use of the project website. This changed to include gaining and then incorporating material from seminar participants on the website resource.

Building capacity and skills

The workshop itself can provide the environment for both participants and facilitators to build skills/knowledge relevant to your project.

Workshops designed to build capacity:

**Promoting teaching and learning communities: institutional leadership project**
The *Practice in Leadership Workshop* was central to the achievement of the project goals. Participants were leaders in learning and teaching in their institutions. The purposes of the workshop included building participants’ confidence in their distributed leadership skills, including in facilitation, listening and mindfulness, and to build participants’ awareness of their own agency as leaders within the context of an emergent community of practice.

The workshop itself engaged participants in a process of collective learning in smaller groups drawing upon a community of practice model. Linda Hort commented that the process of agreeing within the project team on the design, facilitation, and participation in the workshop built capacity amongst the project team:

*In the mire of evolving this workshop model…it proved difficult [as a project team] to hold steady the intention or focus of the workshop. There was wavering in balancing the workshop model between leadership people wanting to keep a community of practice as the primary focus, whilst others focused on leadership capacity building within communities of practice….the discipline was to ensure everyone had the same schema. The planning of the workshop became a catalyst for the project team to push their thinking to a level that would not have been reached otherwise.* (Linda Hort)
Workshops that enabled a community of colleagues with shared interests to emerge/further develop:

**2008 ALTC Fellowships Workshop**
One primary aim of this workshop with ALTC Fellows was to support the development of a community amongst Fellows to enable sharing of ideas, resources, concerns, etc amongst Fellows and the generation of strategies to enable the community of Fellows to provide national/discipline based leadership in learning and teaching. (Adrian Lee)

**Sustainable, evidence-focused learning and teaching approaches to the undergraduate psychology curriculum**
Jacky Cranney facilitated a workshop as part of her ALTC Fellowship that engaged stakeholders in the discussion and development of a shared vision for the future of psychology education to get this discussion on the radar of key stakeholders, e.g. the accrediting body, the professional body, APEN, Heads of Schools in the discipline of psychology, and psychology educators and to facilitate and initiate peer learning and collaboration between key players.

**Providing opportunities for sharing**
Carew *et al.* (2008) suggest that there are three different fragments of practice in academic development, two of which can be applied to workshops. The first involves encouraging the exploration and understanding of specific aspects of teaching practice through reflection, and the second involves developing structures where peers can support themselves and together solve problems. This process of learning in a community is referred to as ‘collegiality’ and can be associated with workshops that seek to foster the development of communities of practice, i.e. groupings within which people share their understandings of work, responsibility and knowledge within the workplace.

**An institutional leadership paradigm: transforming practices, structures and conditions in Indigenous education**
Lyn Fasoli saw the two workshops in this project as producing the outcomes of the project, i.e. the goals of the workshops and the project as a whole were the same – to establish a network amongst those involved with leading Indigenous education, to agree on a shared leadership paradigm, and plans and support for operationalising this paradigm in each of their institutions.
Having decided that a workshop will advance your project goals, the following are questions for you to consider:

*Never use a workshop to pull together information that will sit on the shelf. How are you going to harness the workshop outcomes to further project aims?* (Amanda Henderson)

1. **What are your workshop goals?**

*If the goals are not transparent to participants, trust will not be developed between members and the project team, and open discussion of ideas is unlikely* (Sue Morris)

*If the project team doesn’t agree amongst themselves on what the outcomes of the workshop are to be in advance, there is no way that the workshop participants will be on the same page* (Helen Dalton)

*The most critical aspect of a workshop is to be clear in the first place as to why you are running it and what you hope to achieve* (Adrian Lee)

2. **What will be the outcomes of the workshop for both the participants and the project team?**

3. **What is the value for participants in participating in your workshop?**

*We are all fundamentally self interested. I want to show each participant that they will get something in return for their involvement, e.g. something that will make their job easier* (Amanda Henderson)

4. **Which two or three outcomes will be the focus of your workshop?** Workshops are only relatively brief experiences and fatigue or information overload are always possible. So don’t aim too high.

5. **How will you know that your workshop has been effective?**
As a project team you need to identify the purposes of your workshop(s) within your overall project goals. Use the following questions to help in this:

How will your workshop support the achievement of the overall project aims? (This is an important piece of work for your project team to work together on and may not – quite reasonably – have been clarified in your original ALTC application).

What outcomes do you want participants to gain from the workshop?
What outcomes do you want your project team members to achieve from the workshop?

How will you know that these outcomes have been achieved?
3. When not to include a workshop within your project

If there is no benefit for participants!

*I’m not going to engage as a participant when it is obvious that the workshop is for the project team only. I need to know what is in it for me and what is in it for my institution – the institution is paying for me to come/paying for flights and accommodation and I need to be able to bring something back for my institution.* (Helen Dalton)

*There is only so much you can do in a workshop, one to one follow up and support is often really important afterwards, especially if changes in learning and teaching practice are sought.* (Jacky Cranney)

*It’s important to identify what forums, workshops, etc. can’t do. They can discuss, network, give feedback, brainstorm, etc., but they can’t build or develop. They can outline possible scaffolds and paths for building and developing, but the latter require a process of repeatedly ‘going away and coming back’. That is, they require thought and structure by individuals or a small group, which can then be brought back to a group for feedback, etc. and the process is ongoing. I think one aspect of workshops, forums, planning days, etc. is that too much is expected from them.* (Helen MacGillivray)

*ALWAYS identify where a workshop will fit within the overall purposes of a project. NEVER use a workshop to pull together information that will sit on the shelf.* (Amanda Henderson)

Workshops alone will not be sufficient to enable long term changes in learning and teaching.
4. Whom to invite

Participants to consider inviting include:

- People who represent different perspectives on the area. In the context of your project, workshop participants may not necessarily be the converted but hopefully they are convertible!

- People you would want to implement the project outcomes. Kerri Lee-Harris advised it is important to see that all those invited to the workshop are kept abreast of project processes and outcomes as they occur. Ongoing communication with these colleagues is vital for effective dissemination.

- Participants who had previously been interviewed to gain resources and ideas for the project website so that during the workshop they felt particularly included and committed to the development of the website. (Greg Battye)

- People representing staff from all levels of the university.

- Students!

Kate Westberg noted:

> If solutions/strategies are developed in isolation from those who have to implement them, it is likely to be a disaster. Without the involvement of those responsible for formulating and implementing strategy, wise counsel won’t be heard and engaging colleagues in implementation is unlikely.

If you invite people with known expertise it is respectful to refer to their work within the workshop. People from outside the project can be useful as critical friends within the workshop. Lyn Fasoli noted that:

> The active participation of Elizabeth McDonald and Mary Kumvaj in the working seminars provided the perspective of someone from the outside: a critical friend who could help the team reflect on their achievement of project aims, etc.

It is worth considering whether to invite those students whose learning is the focus of the project in order to inform resource development and to ensure the credibility of the outcomes of the project. The valuable input of our students is often ignored and may require offering a small incentive, but the value in asking students about their experience in relation to the project aims is invaluable. You might want to ask program/course leaders, associate deans education etc., to nominate students and you may wish to provide an incentive for participation such as a book voucher.
We felt that student involvement was absolutely key in order to know how information on the site is received, by any of the users. I would always advocate that for any similar project. (Julie Ballantyne)

Students were very enthusiastic and obliging, and their comments were often uncomfortably penetrating, but quite fair and very practical. (Adrian Lee)

Involve students where appropriate. The workshop in a project is about learning and teaching, and obviously you would include students where this would be relevant to the purpose(s). (Adrian Lee)

The appropriate workshop participation may only become clear as the project emerges. The purpose and participation within one of a series of workshops may be dependent on the outcomes of a previous workshop.

In the project *Developing multi level leadership in the use of student feedback to enhance student learning and teaching practice*, the first workshop highlighted the need to engage those responsible for facilities and services in the university with academics to consider how they might address issues in student learning for which they were responsible and this became the focus of a later workshop/plenary meeting.

Encourage connections between participants – if they leave a workshop having made one link with another person, then a community is on its way to forming. This is the best way to keep the momentum going, as they shared an experience in the workshop and can keep that conversation alive through their communications. You should provide participants with the contact details of others in the workshop (with their permission) to enable this.

The decision about the number of participants depends on the purpose of the workshop. However, between seven and twenty is ideal as everyone can participate easily, and the group is small enough that informality and spontaneity can be maintained and multiple perspectives heard. Beyond this number, members feel less responsible for making the workshop work and subgroups may emerge. However, it is possible and practical to break larger groups into smaller groups during the workshop.

It is important to consider how far in advance you will need to invite participants, given their likely professional and personal activities.

Finally, don’t assume participants want to be there. For example, they may have been nominated to attend by their university, and thus practical relevance to their work context is critical.
As a project team, you need to identify people/roles to include in your workshop to achieve the workshop outcomes. Think of those who can make a positive contribution as well as those who may have a more critical or problematising perspective:

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<thead>
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<th>Who will you invite to participate?</th>
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5. Scheduling

Considerations about the timing of workshops:

**An institutional leadership paradigm: transforming practices, structures and conditions in Indigenous higher education**

Lyn Fasoli noted that having only two workshops meant that less time could be given to enable participants to get to know each other and to ‘check out the project’ to ensure they would get value from their participation. In retrospect, Lyn would have chosen to have three workshops.

**Assessing group work in media and communications project**

Greg Battye suggested that: *when a project goal includes the development of a resource, stakeholders should be involved in three workshops as a minimum during the project. In the early phases stakeholders can provide useful feedback on the process of data gathering. Half way through, when you have gathered all the data but haven’t worked out how it will be put together, you can get ideas from your stakeholders. Near the end of the project, stakeholders can give feedback on how the outcomes of the project are going to be represented.*

Doing this means that stakeholder evaluation can inform the project as it progresses, rather than waiting until the end to get feedback!

**Important practical considerations**

If possible schedule the event at least three months in advance so that potential participants (likely to be busy academics) are able to put the event in their Calendar. Then remind participants a few days ahead of the workshop of the time/location of the workshop.

**Interviewees’ suggestions in relation to workshop scheduling:**

*At the end of the data collection phase. The workshop was held at this point in order to collect further data, to feedback information and ideas out to the academic community and to obtain feedback from stakeholders that would ensure that all views/practices etc. were reflected in the final report [on e-Portfolios]. (Gillian Hallam)*

*Outside teaching time! Easier to get suitable rooms etc. (Claire Jennings)*

*Consider whether multiple workshops are needed at different phases of the project, and whether different stakeholders are needed at each stage? (Greg Battye)*

*[The] midpoint of the project [was] in February. The team had collected data on each of the areas being explored by the project, so there was an opportunity to feed information back to the academic community and to gain feedback from stakeholders to ensure that all views/practices were reflected.... the timing meant that academics were not yet overloaded with the work of the year. (Gillian Hallam)*
As a project team, you need to determine how many workshops you will need and at what critical points they will be held:

How many workshops do you need? And why?

At what critical points should each workshop be held? And why?
6. Promotion

*How to market your project and increase awareness is an important concern for your project team when incorporating a workshop.* (Amanda Henderson)

Develop a one page flyer that attracts interest/curiosity (titles are important) amongst the target group. It should have a large font, simple and strong graphics, clear date, time, and place details with information on how to register (how to register online or submit tear off registration), and full contact details. Having a contact person is vital. It is advisable to include:

- A brief statement of the learning and teaching issue(s) to be considered.
- What participants will gain from the workshop.
- If a well-respected speaker is featured, this should be highlighted.
- The fact that space is limited or that this is a *one-off* event.
- Details of catering and/or accommodation provided.
As a project team, you need to determine how you will promote your workshop:

How will you promote your workshop?
7. Design: what form will your workshop take?

General considerations: Some basic design rules

Every workshop, even on the same topic, will be necessarily different, as it must draw on the experiences of the participants. For it to be meaningful to participants, it has to be about this particular group of people in the room, their disciplines, histories, interests, and personalities. It’s like making pumpkin soup – you bring the basic ingredients, but it is the combination of herbs, spices, subtleties, and nuances that shape it. For this reason, you can plan and prepare for a workshop, but you can never pre-empt the exact path that it will take to reach its outcomes. (Sue Morris)

1. People feel comfortable when they know what is coming next. Set out a clear plan for the workshop and keep to it, even if you negotiate changes to elements of the structure.

2. People have basic human needs that have an impact on their concentration – so remember to build in mental and physical activity (see below), coffee, and lunch breaks, etc.

3. People will concentrate longer if the activity is altered slightly every 15-30 minutes. This may involve changing physical activity or changing mental focus. In a well designed workshop there is a balance between listening and active participation.

4. Start with the simple and move to more complex issues.

5. Break the complex into smaller parts.

6. Start with the safe and move to the risky.

7. People will be swayed by majority voting and the views of the most dominant members of the group when asked to commit in public to a point of view. Giving people the opportunity to anonymously express views can ensure that all views are heard.

8. In a workshop it is helpful to provide opportunities for participants to learn in varying ways using visual, experiential, action and cognitive activities. As workshop facilitators, we usually have our own preferences and it is useful to be aware of these!5

9. We learn more effectively when more than one medium is used.

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5 A summary of learning styles can be found at http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/education/professional_learning/docs/adult_learners.pdf
10. Where possible, workshops should be shared experiences at all levels – if you are expecting participants to share with one another, model this by sharing the facilitation. Preparing a workshop with a peer is the most meaningful and authentic way to do it – it doesn't make sense to prepare a session involving lots of people talking by typing away in a room by yourself!

11. Stopping to allow participants to make sense of what they have experienced in the workshop, and to consider the relevance and application of ideas, is critical if workshops are going to be seen to be supportive of changed practices in learning and teaching and the development of project outputs. Participants can be asked to write down their reactions, e.g. one new idea from what has occurred, one idea that is unclear, and one idea that they disagree with. (see Gibbs, 1981)
(Adapted from Cameron, 2007, p. 30.)

For an overall workshop checklist, please go to The Cookbook, pp. 56–70.
Reflections from Anna Carew on designing workshops:

Draw on your own approach to learning in your discipline, e.g. how you approach small group learning and teaching.

Always build in some unstructured face-to-face time… e.g. over coffee.

Plan your workshop and then cut half of the activity out!

It is difficult to predict how much is too much content so build in some flexibility to allow for extra discussion time or new issues that may emerge in the course of the event.

Always build in time for participants to reflect on what they have done and learned.

The higher order the outcome level, (e.g. awareness raising and understanding are a lower order outcome as compared with application and critical engagement), the longer the time needing to be allocated to the workshop and activity.

Developing your workshop outline

A workshop outline will include:

- A brief workshop title that captures why the workshop is important.
- The overall goals for the workshop.
- The intended workshop outcomes (four maximum).
- A brief program for the workshop.

Most resources on workshops advocate planning following the steps prescribed in adult program planning theory. These stages, while varied in number and name, almost always include: identifying purpose; constructing objectives, selecting content, determining activities; managing the workshop; and evaluating outcomes and possibly process. However, although these stages are necessary, they relate to the more technical aspects of a workshop and they imply a linear approach to workshop planning. The people work is more/just as critical and is particularly discussed under facilitation below.

For an example of a workshop checklist and a workshop outline that can be distributed to participants, please go to *The Cookbook* p. 56.
Use of pre-workshop activities to support workshop outcomes:

Promoting teaching and learning communities: institutional leadership project
In a cross institutional project in which I was involved as the institutional facilitator/coordinator, we had a pre-workshop briefing that enabled both those who were attending the workshop from the institution and those who weren’t attending but were interested in the overall project goals to understand the purpose of the project and to pool initial ideas on the project area drawing on a video and preset questions provided by the project team. Importantly, the preparation required interaction amongst the group of people rather than individual preparation for the workshop retreat which is more usually the case. The pre-workshop preparation was key to outcomes both immediate and long term. The pre-workshop activities were collaborative which meant that we could get to know each other which wouldn’t have happened if we were just reading materials on our own beforehand. Although during the workshop retreat institutional groups were split up, we met up with each other during breaks (Helen Dalton).

Stages in workshop design

Stage 1: Agreeing overall goals and outcomes (refer to Section 2 Why include a workshop? pp. 5-11)

The design must facilitate the outcomes you have agreed upon, e.g. if a new vision of learning and teaching in the discipline is an outcome, the workshop might start with an inspirational speaker. *Dreaming what was possible was an important aspect of the first workshop which sought to build a shared framework for Indigenous leadership in learning and teaching … it got people excited!* (Lyn Fasoli)

*If an intended outcome of the workshop is the building of networks amongst participants, then social time must be built into the workshop plan to enable informal conversations to occur.* (Lyn Fasoli)

Where possible, engage participants in the development of the workshop to help ensure that the workshop is relevant and useful for both participants and your project team.

Stage 2: Pre-workshop phase

Consider if you want participants to engage in a pre-workshop activity either individually or as a group so that individuals come prepared with input from their own expertise and context. However, you may want to have a back-up strategy in case this pre-work has not been completed by all participants. Expect only 50% of participants to complete any workshop task.

Continued over…
Stage 3: Planning for outcomes: Developing your workshop plan

Workshop planning takes time!

The short term nature of a workshop does not mean that it takes less time to plan than a longer program. If anything, it takes more time, because planners must be sure that nothing has been overlooked. Details of conducting the event itself, from greeting participants to closing the workshop, must be meticulously planned and reviewed. This is because workshops compress so much activity into such a short time that there is little or no margin for error. (Harris in Sork, 1984)

It is critical to have a plan but you don’t need to adhere to it feverishly. Allow extra time as a cushion. Many of those interviewed mentioned that starting on time and keeping to time was an issue and noted the importance including registration time to enable starting on time. Also recommended was allowing about 20 minutes each for both morning and afternoon tea, so that participants have sufficient time to share ideas, follow up on any input and return to the workshop venue on time.

You must leave time for everyone to get something out of the workshop, such as relating what has been explored to their own context, so that they can clearly articulate what they will be doing following the workshop in their own context. (Jacky Cranney)
Getting started:
1. At the start of the workshop, briefly introduce key facilitators and explain the roles of project team members, e.g. “as facilitator I will need to try to keep time, ensure that everyone’s input is heard, etc.”
2. Go over the purposes of the workshop and plan with participants explaining, as you progress, the purposes of specific activities.
3. Strategies to help participants to leave their other work and personal lives outside are useful. One strategy developed by Sue Morris is to have a ‘boarding card’ on which participants write (for themselves only) the baggage they are leaving at the door. Using the same analogy, they can record where they have travelled by the end and what they will take with them from the workshop.
4. On a practical level, housekeeping is important, e.g. the location of bathrooms, exits, where meals will be served. Mobiles and laptops can be disruptive during a session. Michael Algar has a wonderfully positive approach for dealing with this issue - Rather than “please turn off your laptop”, I prefer to say “Break times are provided for you to make necessary calls, attend to emails, etc.”

Workshop tools:
Activities during your workshop need to support the achievement of workshop goals. In a well designed workshop there is a balance between listening and active participation. Consider when more didactic input is needed (from people or resources) and where activities can best support the desired workshop outcomes.

Introduction techniques
It’s important to give participants an opportunity to get to know and be comfortable working with each other (I don’t think this is achieved by just going around a group and saying names and disciplines, etc.). The roles of project team members also need to be made explicit, e.g. as facilitator I will need to try to keep time, ensure that everyone’s input is heard, etc.

Having an activity that enables all participants to state where they are at, e.g. their concerns, means that you start at a common place. But you must make sure that you have strategies to move onto solutions. (Anna Carew)

A consideration in the design of a workshop is that participants want to be heard early, and won’t sit still for very long before they want to have an argument. (Anna Carew)

Take the time to learn about your participants, their backgrounds, experiences, and work contexts, and if possible what they would hope to gain from the workshop. This may be in the form of a pre-workshop questionnaire or icebreaker.

Icebreakers are activities that help you and your students get to know each other. With careful planning, they can introduce concepts or processes that are the focus of your workshop. Icebreakers can be useful in reducing tension, creating a climate of participation and helping people to get to know each other. Often these activities are quite contentious and you may not get positive feedback, but when constructed well, they achieve the outcomes above. If the workshop seeks to explore learning
and teaching practice in a discipline start with sharing peoples’ most proud experience of teaching in that discipline, etc. (Klatt, 1999)

Useful icebreakers include:

- Individually participants record their best and worst learning experience and what made it good or bad (it doesn’t need to be a formal experience). Participants then share in pairs, and then, in fours, discuss what some emergent general guidelines behind effective learning experiences are.
- Proud moments: individually and then in pairs get the participants to share their proud moments of teaching that best illustrate their approach to teaching and learning.
- Ask participants individually to write down a question that they have in relation to the workshop topic (it doesn’t matter how big or small) and then to get up and find another person they don’t know well and together answer their questions as well as possible. Pairs report back on questions and answers and unanswered questions are incorporated into the workshop.

Discussion openers
Whatever tasks/discussion topics are chosen it is important to ensure that participants draw upon their own experience and work on their own problems in responding to the workshop content. As a facilitator, it is important to ensure that project team members do not spend more than a very short time visiting breakout groups. Otherwise group members will stop working and talking with each other and focus on you. It is vital that all views expressed are acknowledged and one strategy is to collect the main ideas expressed and record them on large post-its which can then be displayed around the room.

Useful discussion openers include:

- Participants write down their individual responses to an initial question or complete a phrase on a post-it – e.g. “The challenges of teaching graduate attributes are….“ Participants then stick these onto a whiteboard and cluster them (or the facilitator might do this). These ideas can form the basis for further discussion or lead into an activity etc. These notes should be referred back to during the workshop.
- Get participants to work in pairs to produce a list of responses to a given question/challenge: go around the group, recording one answer from each pair until all answers are recorded.
- Hand out a questionnaire relevant to the outcomes of the workshop.
- Open a discussion where participants themselves set the agenda around “burning issues” which they identify and select. The group divides according to the burning issue that the members wish to discuss.

Structured discussion tools

- Brainstorming: this technique is good for generating a list of ideas for further discussion. The facilitator begins by explaining the subject of the brainstorm and explaining that this part of the workshop is about generating ideas not evaluating them – so all ideas are acceptable. Each person is asked to contribute an idea (or they can pass) and the idea is recorded verbatim on the flipchart. When all the ideas have been collected the workshop facilitator invites discussion, encouraging elaboration and synthesis.
- Provide a question relevant to the workshop that participants can address individually and then get them to share their responses with a colleague. This is called the think-pair-share method. Firstly, participants get an opportunity to gather their thoughts
and ideas before starting a discussion. Secondly, participants pair up and compare their responses and in so doing often receive positive feedback about their ideas, which helps them to feel more confident about sharing their ideas amongst the wider group. When recording ideas from the wider group it is important to do so using the words of the participants. This helps to create an environment and an experience of being valued and of valuing different perspectives.

_The language you use is important, e.g. using the words ‘we’ and ‘us’ when talking with participants is more inclusive rather than ‘you’ and ‘I’. _

(Helen MacGillivray)

- Once all ideas are understood, participants can be asked to individually rank the five most important ideas suggested by group members. The results are then collated to identify those ideas with the highest ranking (similar to the nominal group technique).

Alternatively, participants can be given five gold stars and one red spot and asked to put a gold star next to their favoured ideas, and a red spot against the best idea.

**Small group activities**

_Incorporating activities and strategies for giving task instructions_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAPER-BASED BRIEFING</th>
<th>VERBAL BRIEFING</th>
<th>SLIDE BRIEFING</th>
<th>COMBINATION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hand out written instructions. Participants can take these if they move to break-out rooms. Separate directions can be given to different groups if required.</td>
<td>Allows flexibility and fine tuning of tasks based on what has happened. More likely ambiguities will be raised and can be dealt with.</td>
<td>Everyone can see the briefing but presents a problem if some participants move to a different room.</td>
<td>Provide instructions in multiple media e.g. verbally and on paper. This strategy reduces confusion.</td>
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When using activities with small groups, considerations include:

- Small groups comprise between two to five people. Very specific and clear tasks need to be set. Smaller groups can encourage participation, particularly when emotionally charged issues are being discussed.
- Ensuring that smaller groups are sufficiently separated from each other to prevent distractions occurring between groups.
- Giving the group an _end_ time for the task and being reasonably strict on this.
- Checking progress and negotiating a small increase in time if needed.

Ask each group to bring something back to the large group (one particularly relevant idea or example, one conclusion/insight etc.) Getting a full report back from each group can be very boring, repetitious, and result in a loss of energy in the room.
In activities where groups are given a problem to discuss, the problem needs to be sufficiently complex to require the exploration of multiple perspectives. (Helen Dalton)

Sometimes questions given to groups are easily addressed by a few people and such questions don’t encourage the expression and exploration of diverse perspectives. (Helen Dalton)

It is possible to overdo the number of times that the workshop breaks into smaller groups. There are occasions where whole group discussion can be much more effective. (Helen Dalton)

Decide if or when you want participants to form groups with colleagues they don’t know or who come from different backgrounds.

When it is valuable for group members to get to know each other and to tap into the diversity within a group, it is useful for participants to join new groups during the day. This can help create a more inclusive environment and to spread those who perhaps dominate.

It is important to consider whether participants will work with colleagues from their own discipline or not in terms of the purposes of the workshop.

Asking participants to remain in the same group over one or more days can have limited value … [There] can be insufficient time to enable a group to work through conflict [while] simultaneously [limiting] participants from learning from, and contributing to, those not in the group. (Adrian Lee)

An unintended outcome of workshops is that participants have an opportunity to meet and talk to colleagues that they might otherwise never have had a chance to talk to. However, at the start of a workshop, we invariably gravitate to the familiar faces in the room. Using an activity like a jigsaw, where groups split, form new groups, then reform, enables participants to engage with different people while still respecting their group of choice. Also, encouraging a mix of participants across each activity optimises the combinations of stakeholders and views contributing to the workshop. (Adrian Lee)

Presentations

Don't be afraid to have didactic input … constant activities can feel very disjointed for me as a participant and don’t allow me to go deep in my thinking. Think about when you want to have the theoretical input. Sometimes it is helpful to have some activity at the start that helps participants engage with the area, and then have the theoretical input, e.g. a keynote speaker. (Helen Dalton)

Limited presentations preferably made by an engaging dynamic speaker, can be useful to:

- Set the scene before launching participants into an activity.
- Raise awareness of the context relating to a forthcoming activity.
• Provide participants with the big picture and map out various components of the resource pack if relevant. Metaphors and storytelling are both useful techniques for conveying an overall framework or illustrating new ideas.

• To debrief in a plenary session the outcomes of an activity which participants have engaged in (Race 2003 p. 5)

*However, if you decide to include a guest speaker it is generally preferable that they speak after the group has worked together. Unfortunately, too often guest speakers do not acknowledge or even know what participants have said so that they cannot refer to such comments during their input. This can lead participants to feel unheard and not valued.* (Adrian Lee)

To avoid the speaker going over time, you might have a team member sit at the back with cards indicating the time remaining, e.g. five minutes (green card), one minute (yellow card), and stop (red card). Alternatively, stand up at one minute to go and move closer to the speaker as time runs out. It is important to brief the speaker before the event, emphasising time constraints. Time keeping methods should also be negotiated.

There are many forms of activities that can support the achievement of your workshop aims and these are discussed in more detail in *The Cookbook* section of this resource.
Stage 4: Endings

If the purpose of a workshop is to enable skill/knowledge development and change, the workshop design should mean that participants work on or towards something that can be taken back to their institutions and acted upon. Part of this enactment needs to include identification of whom they now need to interact with, so all workshops have a leadership component. (Helen Dalton)

When designing the final activities, it is important to ensure that the impact of the workshop will extend beyond the workshop itself. There must be time for participants to identify one or two things they will do differently in their educational practice as a result of your workshop and to record these.

Not only might participants want to hang around the workshop space during breaks and afterward, e.g. because they are so engaged with talking with colleagues, etc., but there must be something that sticks with each participant after the day when they return to their workplace….change requires you to do something different – make sure you and/or the participants identify the one thing that you want them to be able to do differently at the end of the session and let them know too. Don’t expect them to change any more than one thing! Make sure they leave the room with their one thing written down, so that it is tangible and they can refer to it. (Sue Morris)

As participants we were asked to represent what we had learned as a model, but I felt this trivialized the depth of what had been discussed and I didn’t feel I went away with anything. Final activities need to look to the future in some way. (Helen Dalton)

Plan the conclusion of the workshop … this does not mean summarizing the outcomes as this can be patronising. One way of doing this is to [foreshadow] what will come after the workshop e.g. recognising the value to the project of the participants’ input and allow how the team will be using the input from the day, noting how the team will maintain contact with participants. (Kerri Lee-Harris)

Stage 5: Looking after yourself

Be kind to yourselves and be flexible.

Be willing to change (and communicate you are doing this) when, for example, participants suggest an important area that should be explored further. Dropping an activity can be useful. (Helen Dalton)
Stage 6: The next stage! Post workshop

At some stage, reconnect with your participants – if you want them to transfer what they have done in your workshop to their workspaces, you need to prompt them in their world. Hearing from you (voice, email, face) might just remind them of the one thing they planned to do as a result of the workshop. We all need a little memory jog every now and then. (Lyn Fasoli)

It is critical to send to participants a record of key ideas, resources, etc., from the workshop they undertook with you. Including how the workshop outcomes will inform your project is vital! It is also important to include a report of your workshop in your final project report.

For the project team it is invaluable to debrief immediately afterwards to ensure that you have captured/explored all ideas, etc., and to reflect on how you worked as a team. In essence, you are evaluating the effectiveness of how you went about planning, facilitating, and evaluating your workshop, to further improve the way your team works together.

For some suggestions for reflecting on your workshop, please go to The Cookbook p. 56.
As a project team, jot down your team’s ideas about:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the purpose of your workshop and hoped for outcomes?</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>What pre-workshop activities are relevant?</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>What are your initial thoughts on the plan for workshop?</th>
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<th>How will you end the workshop?</th>
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<tr>
<th>How will you care for yourselves as a team (including celebrations) during and after the workshop?</th>
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8. Working as a project team

Every member of a project team has a role (or several) in relation to the planning, facilitation and evaluation of a workshop. It is important to decide who is going to do what at each phase of your workshop before the workshop. In fact, it is useful for individuals to change roles, for example, facilitation is exhausting if you do it for a day, and taking a back seat role as observer at some stage can give time to refresh and refocus.

During the workshop, the project team members’ roles can become less task oriented as workshop participants may take up these functions, and more focused on maintaining interpersonal aspects of the group. It becomes even more important to monitor the communication within the group. People who don’t feel heard/their views acknowledged will leave the group either physically or emotionally.

Possible roles include:

- Timekeeper
- Gatekeeper
- Facilitator
- Cleaner
- Note-taker/report writer
- Observer
- Mediator
- Harmonizer

It is really important to have someone (or a number of people) who are going to note down ideas/resources mentioned, etc., during the day. In this way the recorder creates a group memory of what participants are saying. It is really important to clarify what is expected of the record keeper, for example you probably don’t want every word noted and you may want to include photos, Post-its from workshop groups, etc., in the record. Think about what will be done with the notes. Ideally, copies of the notes should be sent out to participants following your event.
9. Facilitation

What is facilitation?

The role of a facilitator is not to be a content expert, but rather to be skilful at making connections between what is said, written, shared, and, if you’ve done your homework, between literature and other things you’ve heard (from teachers, students, etc). You connect ideas, words, experiences, papers, and Post-its. (Sue Morris)

Skills of facilitation in sessions with peers are similar skills that an academic uses when teaching smaller groups of students, e.g. in tutorials, and that a student needs to use when working collaboratively with peers. (Kerri Lee-Harris)

Facilitators are responsible for ensuring that the workshop runs smoothly, stays focused, and achieves workshop goals. This means keeping an eye on the participants, the goals, and the physical aspects of the workshop.

As a facilitator, you should not be contributing opinions, ideas, feelings, answers to questions, input on a proposal, or solutions to dilemmas. You give up your power to influence content in order to hold an impartial space for group discussion. If you are yearning to add a comment, usually if you wait a little while someone else will say what you were thinking of. Occasionally you may need to step outside the facilitator role but it is important to be explicit that this is what you are doing. (Bressen 2008)

Style of facilitation is a very personal thing. A colleague who is very extroverted has a very active, energetic approach, whereas another colleague is very quiet and reflective as a facilitator. As a facilitator, I don’t want to be seen as the sage on the stage so in a practical sense I make sure that I move around the room seeking to foster distributed leadership within the workshop group. (Helen Dalton)

There should always be a foundation of mutual respect in a workshop. If necessary, collectively determine ground rules to promote this and ensure that this expectation is communicated - implicitly may be sufficient in some, but not all, cases. (Sue Morris)
Skills of facilitation

Effective facilitation involves:

- Demonstrating respect for the experience and expertise each participant brings into the room and ensuring that each person is heard.\(^6\)
- Making sure that for each participant the outcomes of the workshop are meaningful, relevant and valuable.
- Giving participants the responsibility for actively thinking and problem solving during your workshop and ensuring that participants know how their input will be used within the project overall.

How will participants experience that their views are respected, sought, valued and that responsibility is shared for the outcomes and success of the project?

Respect can be conveyed by knowing your participants, the roles they play in their institution or organization, their interests, knowledge, and experience.

*Know your audience beforehand: learn each participant’s name and discipline area or other brief relevant background information. If you can’t get it beforehand, use an icebreaker to find something out. Refer to this information as much as is appropriate during the session e.g. “Marcus, is that the case in Chemistry as well?”* (Anna Carew)

Respect can also be conveyed by encouraging the ‘snowballing’ of ideas, i.e. building ideas on those already expressed.

Respect is conveyed by valuing, acknowledging, and drawing upon the diversity of backgrounds and opinions represented by participants. One ALTC Fellow noted, *I would need to consider the cross-cultural aspects because the workshop would involve Aboriginal people – I would need to allow for great flexibility in seating, coming and going, making kids welcome, encouraging Aboriginal languages, making interpretations/interpreters available, making tea, coffee, fruit always available.* Another Fellow noted, *in a workshop, I like to feel comfortable to take any position and not to feel that one is the preferred option. A skilful facilitator can draw on diverse views and synthesise them and generally draw links between the varying views expressed.*

Building trust is particularly important. ‘Ground rules’ can be a useful way to ensure that everyone can feel heard, particularly when participants represent different perspectives/ experiences/roles/expertise etc.

*The facilitator’s role includes ensuring that all views are respected and heard in an environment of generosity.* (Kerri-Lee Harris)

*We returned to participants’ drafts of the leadership framework that we were developing together and requested feedback from participants. Even if they didn’t have time, etc., to contribute, there was a sense of communally developed knowledge.* (Lyn Fasoli)

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\(^6\) This can be achieved by seeking confirmation by repeating what you heard the person say; incorporating into a general summary what was said (whilst attributing the view to the participant); scribing ideas onto a flip chart at the front of the room using the words of the participant, etc.
In Australia (as with many other countries), it is a sign of respect to acknowledge the Indigenous owners of the land.

Susan Page, Director of the Warawara Department of Indigenous Studies at Macquarie University, suggests the following opening for workshops held in Australia:

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and pay my respects to all Aboriginal people here today, and to their families, past and present.

or

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Aboriginal land and pay my respects to the traditional elders, past and present.

Respect can also be associated with a sense of inclusivity. This means avoiding generating any sense of ‘us’ and ‘them’ or ‘cliques’.

The language you use is important e.g. using the words ‘we’ and ‘us’ when talking with participants is more inclusive rather than using ‘you’ and ‘I’. (Helen MacGillivray)

Participants should be able to see that the project team is trying to work in an empowering way.

Just the way we always communicated in provisional tentative language communicated that we wanted participants to give us feedback, that we didn’t see ourselves as having the answer!

Put yourself in the participants’ shoes. Will they have questions they want answered at the start, will they have read any preparation materials? (Helen MacGillivray)

The safety and privacy of individual participants needs to be respected. It is not unusual for there to be a sense of chaos in the group, particularly at the start. Concerns such as ‘Why are we here?’ ‘Who is leading this?’ etc, may be evident. It is useful for the facilitator to respond appropriately when such concerns arise.
Example of modelling making task expectations explicit:

An institutional leadership paradigm: transforming practices, structures and conditions in Indigenous higher education project

In the project led by Lyn Fasoli’s project, which focused on Indigenous leadership in higher education, the facilitation explicitly modelled and demonstrated ‘both ways education’ which refers to the practice of drawing on both Indigenous and western knowledge and assumes mutual respect for all people. Participants were of both an Indigenous and non-Indigenous background and facilitators sought to focus on those aspects of both domains where there is compatibility. For example, the Garma Maths curriculum, which finds correspondences between peoples’ connections with place (Djalkiri), and concepts of pattern and space in western maths.

Providing models of the tasks that participants are asked to complete, e.g. Lyn asked participants to develop an action plan for operationalising a leadership paradigm in their institutions. To support this, Lyn worked through the process using one group’s stated values and ideas as the basis for developing an action plan.

Other key elements of facilitation include taking on roles that are needed but not being performed within the group – for instance, taking responsibility for summarising key points, keeping track of where the group is at, and weaving together the diverse viewpoints that have been expressed into a sense of the whole all assist the group in focusing.

A further useful strategy involves modelling what you are asking participants to do. For example, if you are asking participants to share positive and negative learning experiences with a colleague you might provide your own specific examples first. Never ask participants to share something that you would feel uncomfortable sharing yourself.

Example of encouraging people to build from each other’s ideas:

Bioassess project
The Bioassess project involved progressive roundtable discussions to identify issues, ideas, and assessment strategies. It was important to build on the learning from each roundtable discussion in turn, and to demonstrate by referring to ideas expressed by participants in earlier roundtables, that participant views would be recorded, valued and incorporated into the project outcomes. To further insure that roundtable discussions were informed and could build upon discussions at other roundtable sessions, each state roundtable had two facilitators, one of whom then went on to co-facilitate the session in another state. Facilitators could then commence the discussion by saying ‘When facilitating last week’s roundtable in Melbourne/Sydney/Brisbane/Hobart, issues raised included …’

Effective workshops are ones in which each member benefits from the contributions of other members and shares accountability for the effectiveness of the workshop (Klatt 1999, p. 33).
10. Some traps to avoid

Seeing the workshop in isolation from the project as opposed to being an integral part of the project

Being too locked-in to structure:

_Not giving your participants time to rest and reinvigorate. Especially with a two day workshop, schedule time at the end of the day for work or even a bath._

(Elizabeth McDonald)

Do not go over time – respect your participants’ time and other commitments

Preaching:

_It is vital to have and to demonstrate genuine respect for your participants. It is unwise to think that you have all the answers. You have to be genuinely open to input if you are going to seek it!_ (Kerri Lee-Harris)

Avoid jargon:

_Those involved with curriculum development often have their own terminology such as alignment. Avoid edu-speak. If you can’t explain an idea/concept in plain language, you don’t really understand it._ (Kerri Lee-Harris)

Over and under participation:

_Participation concerns during the workshop may include: over participation, under participation, aggression, and domination by members. The role of facilitator also requires that difficult/disruptive behaviour is not allowed to dominate._ (Sork, 1984)

Concerns relating to participation influence the level of energy experienced by participants and prevention is preferable to having to fix the problem. It is helpful to begin the workshop by stating the importance for your project of gaining from all the perspectives represented in the room and reiterating this throughout the day.

It is useful to consider possible reasons for over participation, e.g. real expertise in the area or an extremely confident nature.

Strategies for managing over participation include the recognition of the contribution of the participant, saying thank-you (as with any contribution), interrupting and summarizing what has been said and asking for others’ views. Walking closer to the speaker can also convey both your interest and your intention to move onto others.

_Many of those who over participate are experienced people who others need to hear from. If you know this in advance, you can seed questions/viewpoints from other participants so that alternative views are explored. It can also be useful to acknowledge and value the view expressed by the person who is dominating before moving on e.g. interrupt if necessary and say, “that’s a really good point – could we focus on that for a bit. What do people think about this?”_ (Helen MacGillivray)
Use informal times (e.g. coffee breaks) to chat to under and over participators, to try and get a sense of their story, or issues that are important to them. This serves to make them feel like they have been heard, but may also give you an insight into what may be underpinning their behaviour.
(Sue Morris)

Similarly under participation can have a number of causes and it is helpful to consider why a person may not be contributing – e.g. required attendance at workshop, nervousness, more knowledgeable than rest of group, etc.

Strategies such as think-pair-share are useful for building the confidence to participate. Referring to people by name helps to ensure that shyer members feel heard.

Mixing subgroups for group activities can help ensure expertise and experience is shared across the group.

Sitting down as a facilitator sends a message that you are NOT controlling input and sitting opposite quieter members can signal that you/the group are particularly keen to hear their views.

When quieter participants do get involved, respond by being rewarding, e.g. by smiling, saying ‘uh-huh’ and remembering to refer to what they have said later in the workshop, e.g. “As Michael was saying ....”

Finally, be wary of over participating as a facilitator i.e. spending all the time talking about your experience rather than enabling and encouraging others to be heard!
Domination, aggression and conflict

It is useful to consider why participants may be behaving aggressively or dominating the discussion, e.g. are they trying to assert control, feeling unheard, trying to get support for a particular view, etc. Members of a group rarely reject structure unless it is perceived as arbitrary, unfair or inappropriate.

Approaches for managing aggression are all based on avoiding ‘getting caught into being defensive’ (easier said than done) and staying calm and demonstrating that you have heard and really understood the view expressed. Humour can be very effective.

Conflict is more likely as the diversity of group membership increases, e.g. in terms of a range of positions in the organisational hierarchy. This rise in conflict has to be balanced against a likely reduction in the creativity of participants’ ideas when the group is relatively homogenous. The trick is to encourage conversations between group members rather than dialogues between group members and yourself as facilitator.

Conflict is also more likely if there is too much focus on task achievement, particularly early on in a workshop, without sufficient attention being paid to the social and personal needs of participants. The facilitation role entails adopting any desirable behaviours that are currently not being displayed by all of the participants in the workshop.

Parking lot

Where suggestions are not directly relevant, I have a large Post-it with ‘parking lot’ written on it and I put on any topic comments that can’t be responded to at the time but which we need to return to. (Helen MacGillivray)

During group discussion it is useful to go around the groups and jot down ideas that you hear that may be rich examples and new ideas that you can return to later.

Remember that shifting people out of their learning and teaching comfort zone is an emotional experience (Anna Carew)

For extended workshops, particularly those with multiple presenters, make sure you are in the room as much of the time as possible. A storyline is being built up in the participants’ heads, incorporating all that has been said by facilitators and participants alike. You need to understand the storyline, and not assume that knowing what is on another facilitator’s slides is enough! (Sue Morris)

Use a reflective log at the end of each session – write down what worked and what didn’t work, when participants were most engaged, and when they weren’t, and any surprising issues. Actually use the reflective log when planning other sessions. (Sue Morris)
11. Practical tips

Prior preparation prevents poor performance!

*It is critical to organise technology, venues, food (very important), speakers, and seating design well in advance, in order to meet workshop goals.*

(Claire Jennings)

Check, recheck, and triple-check all arrangements.

As in real-estate, it’s all about Location, Location, Location!!

Never underestimate the importance of location! Nor the importance of booking well in advance – six months is the minimum desirable. Choose a location that is as accessible as possible to all.

*Off-campus* locations mean that participants are less likely to rush off during the workshop for meetings, etc. It enables participants to focus on the event by reducing distractions. Creativity is more likely in a relaxed *off-campus* environment.

Send participants a map showing clearly how to get to the workshop location and put clear directional signs leading to the workshop room from several different directions (otherwise participants may get lost or arrive late and feel frustrated, or assume that the workshop is unimportant).

Is parking going to be necessary? If so, tell participants in advance where to park. There is little that is more distracting for participants than not being able to find a park and therefore missing the beginning of the workshop.

Will there need to be a child-friendly space for participants who bring their families with them?

The ideal workshop locations are light and airy, with plenty of fresh air and a good ambient temperature. However, if you have no choice other than a dingy windowless room, you will have to ensure that the workshop is very engaging!
Space – the final frontier ...

Flexible space is vital. Tiered lecture theatres and boardrooms are not conducive to free discussion and activity.

It is helpful to be sensitive to shyer members and to have a space where they can retreat to, e.g. being able to go outside or look at posters on the wall, etc. (Anna Carew)

The room(s) used must command all of the participants’ attention while they are in the room (which means no distractions from air-conditioning, noises, etc.) (Sue Morris)

The ideal room for a workshop is spacious, carpeted, well ventilated, and versatile, and it has natural lighting, good acoustics, movable tables, comfortable chairs, and whiteboards all can see! (Harris in Sork 1984 p. 49)

One of my big problems is that ALTC project workshops take place in ballrooms! With ten people around a table…it’s like going to a wedding…. You can’t possibly hear the person at the other side of the table, nor read their nametag. (Helen MacGillivray)

When you want smaller group discussion it is important that the group has its own space and that people can talk freely. For example, in the Promoting teaching and learning communities: institutional leadership project, Linda Hort organised for each subgroup to either have its own room or to share a room with only one [other] group. (Helen Dalton)

Do you need breakout rooms/spaces? Flat space is always preferable to encourage open discussion and group work. Small tables for group work are desirable. A seminar room with a conference table can work well for a small group of eight to ten participants who will be using highly interactive methods, including brainstorming, discussions, and problem solving.

Obstructions to vision in the room are undesirable.

Effective lighting that makes it easy to see others and read, and also to see screens is important.

Acoustics are vital. Outside noise can be very distracting. With larger groups at least two roving microphones should be available and have people ready to manage them as questions and comments arise that need to be heard by all.

Temperature – too low is as unpleasant as too high.

Audio-visual facilities: does the room have internet access, AV outlets, etc.?

Refreshment facilities for meals and breaks, and toilet facilities, need to be near the workshop.
Timing is everything

Many ALTC workshops bring together participants from across Australia. Consider starting mid-morning and ending in the early afternoon of the following day to enable all participants to contribute to the full program.

You also need access to the workshop space at least an hour before the workshop to check logistics. Make sure you have the name and contact details of the facilities officer or hotel staff member and AV technician assigned to your event.

Names, names, names

Name tags must have the name in a large clear font. If you include the participant’s academic title in smaller font than their name, you provide a more equal environment amongst participants. Welcoming each participant by name at the beginning and remembering their names throughout (and their discipline area) are both very important.

Use nametags, and refer to participants by name as much as possible. For workshops that last more than one day, you should aim to know everyone’s name by the end of the first day. Start by learning one name per table, so that you can refer to ‘John’s group’ rather than ‘this group here’. Even if you don’t know all of the people in that group, they will feel that you do.
(Anna Carew)

Useful tips on learning names can be found at:

http://tep.uoregon.edu/workshops/teachertraining/beginnings/onlinebeginnings/learn names.html
Technology

When it comes to technology – remember to KISS - ‘Keep It Simple Stupid’.

Don’t use technology just to look flashy. Technology should enhance, not distract from, the learning.

*Use screen captures rather than actively accessing the website during the day. Technology can disrupt the flow of the session should problems occur.*

(Claire Jennings)

Always test equipment in advance.

Death by PowerPoint

Too many words on a PowerPoint slide, particularly if small font is used, makes slides painfully difficult to read. So use PowerPoint only to highlight main points, not to illustrate every detail. If participants need detailed content, give it as a handout.

Don’t use all the bells and whistles of PowerPoint, they distract from what you are saying.

Limit the number of PowerPoint presentations and have a maximum of ten slides with a maximum of six to eight lines per slide – use a minimum 30 font in Arial or another easily readable font.

Load slides onto the desktop of the computer/laptop in advance, test how the data projector works and make sure the screen can be seen from every seat. If you do not know, ask.

Each participant needs a copy of your slides before hand, in order to follow and take notes.

Stay out of the projector’s beam – the presenter walking through this is very distracting.

Don’t feel bad if you skip a slide or two because they are no longer relevant. [This does not excuse insufficient preparation of a presentation]

Podcasts, videos, etc. are useful for demonstrating major ideas in a short time, but limit their length, explain why you are showing them, and follow the presentation with time for participants to reflect and talk about what they have seen.

(adapted from Race 2007.)
Flippin’ charts …

Set the flipchart(s) up before the workshop starts.

Bring your own marker pens, and don’t forget Blu-Tack if you don’t have large sticky sheets on the flipchart.

Don’t write too much onto a flipchart – remember participants need to be able to read the words without difficulty.

Prepare headings of important flipcharts in advance.

Get participants to use or write up flipcharts themselves, e.g. to assist in reporting back.

Take the flipcharts with you and include their content in the workshop report.

WRITE LARGER THAN NORMAL!

Seating – the great equalizer!!

Ideally, participants should be able to see each others’ eyes. Do not allow second or third seating rows to build up.

Seating can be used to help create an active learning environment. Encourage participants to move to different groups during the day. U shape, O shape and V arrangements of chairs and tables all encourage participation and awareness of other group members, whereas the lecture format conveys a position of passivity and a limited expectation of participant involvement. Seating arrangements are likely to reflect the purposes of the workshop and may vary throughout the workshop.

*If a workshop continues over two days consider asking participants to move their chairs away from a table and to form groups of X number … [doing this] creates a new space.* (Michael Algar)

*Square and rectangular tables can be joined and pulled apart, allowing for varying group sizes. Ensure that the tables are positioned such that you can move easily around the room, rather than being stuck at the front for the duration.* (Adrian Lee)

Laughter is the best medicine

Just as our students value learning experiences that are challenging, engaging, relevant, interesting and fun, the same is likely to be true of ourselves!
Take a break …

A break about every 90 minutes is vital to allow participants to concentrate properly, to informally network with each other, and to have a walk! Having the first coffee break fairly early on can allow participants to relax and chat.

Food, glorious food

Check in advance whether participants have any particular dietary needs. Again, this helps participants to feel cared about, and if there is no opportunity to share food and drink then networking is less likely.

Resources (“I thought you were bringing the phone list!?”)

Provide only resources that relate to your workshop purpose and are digestible! A plan for the day(s) and a list of participants and contact details may be all that is needed. Colour coding resources means that it is easy to identify which resource you are referring to during your workshop.

> There was considerable discussion regarding the resource pack to be given to participants on the day and what to include. It was agreed to reduce the size of the pack. In hindsight, I would have liked to have organised to have printed the resources earlier. Potentially it could have been couriered to Perth rather than having to take it on the plane. (Claire Jennings)

Know well in advance the resources you will need for the sessions and how you will make sure that they are available to participants either before or on the day.

A resource that pulls together the entire experience of the workshop can be useful, e.g. Linda Hort used a metaphor of ‘the journey’ to trigger discussion on the development of communities of practice. A resource explaining the metaphor was used throughout the workshop. However, other resources given to participants were not necessarily referred to.

> Consider what resource(s) you want to give out at the start and what you’d prefer to hand out at the end – resources that participants can refer to after the event. (Adrian Lee).

Workshop report

It is critical to send participants a brief report on areas that were considered during the workshop. This should include a summary of any discussions, actions to be taken, (and by whom), overall evaluation, a photo of participants, and participant contact details.

You may wish to have two versions of the report: one for participants and one for accountability purposes, e.g. to report to your reference group or committee.
12. **Long term impact**

The long term impact of a workshop is often its aspect least considered by project teams, which further increases the chance that the workshop will be a one-off event:

While they [workshops] may be conducted with a group of academics, or even a discipline, their outcomes are basically individual in orientation. The experience of coming away for an academics’ development workshop designed to encourage academics to adopt a student-centred view of teaching … is often limited to renewed enthusiasm to try something new. Yet that enthusiasm and initial impetus is now often lost in the increasing tide of competing and conflicting priorities in everyday academic life. (Treleaven et al. 2007)

This is something I would like to think about. A lot of what we do is to light fires. Later on the impact becomes evident. (Anna Carew)

Participants from [each] university need to be encouraged to debrief together after the workshop, perhaps debriefing others who hadn’t participated, and to consider in the light of their experience [the] one key thing they want to do to enhance learning and teaching in their discipline/institution. [They can also consider] who they need to talk to, what barriers constrain their ability to achieve this change, and how they will go about dealing with this constraint? (Helen Dalton)

Longer term impact needs to be supported back in the participant’s institution. (Helen Dalton)

Longer term impact of these events is difficult to manage. However, you can record people’s views and circulate these afterwards to remind participants of key concern and strategies that evolved. Try to stay in email contact with participants afterwards, e.g. establish an email list that can be used to share conferences, etc. This can be difficult as people move on, etc. (Helen MacGillivray)

This is an important question and is difficult to ensure … the ALTC Exchange provides the potential to foster communities and to encourage greater interchange and networking of those involved in the area. It’s important that a project is not simply associated with a flurry of activity that then gets forgotten in the future. (Gillian Hallam)

There may be a limit to [the] long term impact of the one-off event, however in the future when participants experience a combination of institutional valuing and opportunities for leadership in learning and teaching together with capacity building opportunities, learning from the workshop may return to significance for the participants. (Linda Hort)

Using online technology such as discussion forums, wikis, or even email discussion lists, is a really simple way to continue to engage with participants, and lets them know that they are part of an ongoing conversation. (Sue Morris)
As a project team, you need to consider the longer-term impact:

What strategies for long term impact could you incorporate beyond the workshop itself?
13. Evaluation

The golden rule of evaluation is only to gather the information that will be useful. (Kerri Lee-Harris).

Just as our students want to know how their feedback is used, so do workshop participants.

In general, the purpose of the workshop should frame the evaluation questions asked. How the evaluation information will be used, as well as practical and ethical constraints are also important factors in considering how your workshop will be evaluated.

Uh-oh! I have to confess that because our workshop didn’t quite follow the pattern we had intended — two people we expected didn’t come, and at the time we were actually a bit concerned about that — our intended evaluation fell apart a bit. We had intended to do a proper evaluation, but then the whole thing took on a more informal turn. (Anon)

The purpose of evaluation must be very clear. Are you seeking to evaluate participant satisfaction with the workshop, skill development, longer term impact on behaviour, etc?

A useful although simple approach to evaluation is that of Kirkpatrick (1975) who identified four levels of evaluation:

KIRKPATRICK’S MODEL OF EVALUATION

Level 1 – Reaction

Did participants like the workshop? Did they feel positive? etc., e.g. ask participants to rate various aspects of the workshop, to comment on the best aspects and what could be improved or omitted.

Allow participants five minutes to complete this whilst they are still in the room otherwise it will not be done.

A cautionary note: satisfied participants may not necessarily have learned anything of value and unsatisfied participants may have learned something of value. Focusing on satisfaction alone is a bit like saying that satisfied hens are the most productive!

**Level 2 – Learning**

Did participants learn from the workshop? Enjoyment doesn’t necessarily lead to learning something new. Again a brief questionnaire can be useful with questions such as, what is one idea I will apply now, what is one idea/area that I am confused about?

**Level 3 – Transfer**

Did participants use what they had learnt after the workshop? Is there evidence of curriculum change and/or changes in teaching practice? Are there changes in attitudes or beliefs e.g. academics’ beliefs relating to the embedding of graduate attributes?

**Level 4 – Results**

Did this behaviour improve learning and teaching outcomes? Although measures of teaching and learning are imperfect, improvements in teaching practice and curriculum within or across disciplines can be associated with improvements in relevant institutional and national learning and teaching indicators.

> I’m not really interested in evaluating formally if participants had fun. I’m much more interested in evaluating evidence of the longer term impact of the workshop for participants (and for the project as a whole) and changes in thinking! (Helen MacGillivray)

By delaying evaluation until participants have had an opportunity to apply what they have learned, unanticipated problems can be identified and participants can be encouraged to further reflect on the applicability of workshop outcomes to their context.

What is often measured is the participants’ perception of increased understanding and skill development. Whether this is followed up with changed behaviours is harder to evaluate, e.g. are participants in a communities of practice workshop actively facilitating the emergence of a community of practice in their institution? Follow-up web-based surveys and phone links can be used to indicate behavioural and attitudinal change.
Evaluation at the end of an engaging yet exhausting one or two day workshop does not provide time for participants to reflect and chew over what they have learned.

Evaluation after the first iteration of the workshop can inform improvements to future iterations.

The first seminar got bogged down with discussions about challenges and didn’t move into discussion about strategies so in later seminars, each table of participants was asked to share one strategy only that they had discussed. This approach allowed room for new contributions from each table and generated more positive suggestions. (Claire Jennings)

Evaluation during a workshop can provide an opportunity to make adjustments to the rest of the workshop, to ensure participants feel heard, and to allow participants to express any frustrations.

Build in opportunities for micro-evaluations (while participants are doing an activity) and be flexible. If something’s not working, it’s better to change it (openly) than carry on down a perilous path that’s doomed to fail! Team teaching makes this easier as you can reality-check whether it’s not really working the way you thought it would. (Sue Morris)

Participants were encouraged to record burning questions or comments on idea cards. This gave participants a strategy to air concerns without necessarily being consumed by them…it was as if having expressed them, they could put these concerns aside. The evaluator summarized these comments and concerns at the start of the second day and this gave the project evaluator further insight into the perspectives and concerns of national and international participants with the project. (Gillian Hallam)

Evaluation at the end of the first of two days, using minute paper and facilitator observer feedback, enabled the project leader to clear up misunderstandings at the start of day two and to acknowledge the

For a sample workshop evaluation form, please go to The Cookbook pp. 67–68.
As a project team, you need to consider how you might evaluate your workshop(s):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why are you evaluating your workshop?</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you want to know?</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will you do with this information once you get it?</th>
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</table>
As a project team, you may also wish to use Kirkpatrick’s four levels of evaluation. Try filling this in, in relation to your workshop:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>MEASURING WHAT?</th>
<th>EVALUATION TOOLS AND METHODS</th>
<th>RELEVANCE TO/ APPLICATION IN YOUR WORKSHOP?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ONE – REACTIONS</td>
<td>Reactions to or feelings about the workshop and/or learning experience.</td>
<td>E.g. happy sheets, verbal reaction, post-workshop surveys, and/or questionnaires.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWO – LEARNING</td>
<td>Learning or the increase in knowledge as a result of the workshop.</td>
<td>E.g. some form of test or interview after the workshop.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL</td>
<td>MEASURING WHAT?</td>
<td>EVALUATION TOOLS AND METHODS</td>
<td>RELEVANCE TO/ APPLICATION IN YOUR WORKSHOP?</td>
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<tr>
<td>THREE – TRANSFER</td>
<td>Changes in actual learning and teaching practice.</td>
<td>E.g. observation and interview over time to assess change, and the relevance and sustainability of that change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOUR – RESULTS</td>
<td>Impact on learning and teaching of the workshop.</td>
<td>E.g. normal proxy measures of improved learning and teaching practices and outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE COOKBOOK
## 14. The cookbook

The following exemplars, tables and templates are to support you in planning, facilitating, and evaluating your workshop.

### Overall checklist

Not all elements are appropriate to every workshop, so please use these as a prompts only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-workshop</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you agreed on overall workshop goals?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you agreed on workshop outcomes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has an outline program been developed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you decided on the participants to be invited?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you created a good title for your event that will be lived up to?</td>
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<td>Has a budget been developed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have responsibilities pre/during/post workshop been agreed upon?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Choosing the venue</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has the venue been decided upon?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have contracts or pre-payments for venue and services been organised?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you received, read, signed and returned a comprehensive event order that details all services to be supplied at the venue?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you checked the room(s) for size, shape, lighting and equipment?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will parking be needed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is seating moveable?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are the tables moveable?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have decisions been made about layout for each session, e.g. O, U or V shape?</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOCUS</td>
<td>RESPONSIBILITY</td>
<td>NOTES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have decisions been made about the way small group work will be accommodated?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are breakout rooms needed and, if so, are they available nearby?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is it necessary for participants to access computers/wireless?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will there be flipcharts available in the room?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will accommodation be needed for participants/project team/speakers/ALTC officers etc?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will there be a data projector in the room?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is a lapel, podium, or roving microphone needed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where will food/refreshments be placed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do participants have special dietary needs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you run through the event order with venue staff on the day of the event to confirm timing and catering?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you know how to adjust the lighting and air-conditioning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can your workshop remain set-up overnight?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Promotion</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Will promotion of the event attract the desired participants?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is registration method organised?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If a speaker is included, have they been invited, agreed, payment organised, and a brief biography written?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have media been contacted and briefing sheets written?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has a photographer or the taking of photographs of the event been organised?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have registrants been sent a map in advance to help find the venue?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have handouts, including the program, been prepared and copied?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Will any materials be sent to participants in advance?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will handouts be issued to participants at the beginning, during, or at the end of the workshop?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can materials be delivered and stored securely prior to and after the event?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will copies of slides be available to participants?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do participants need pens, paper?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will you need Blu-Tack, laptop, large and smaller Post-its, marker pens?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Backup person for AV or contact name and number?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you have boxes, address labels and courier contacts so that return of materials can be arranged after the event?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### A good start

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have signs been put up directing participants to the venue from several directions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who will welcome and sign-in, participants and direct them to tea/coffee?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nametags for all involved? (Participants, facilitators and any guest speakers)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have PowerPoint slides been uploaded and tested? Is sound or internet access required?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you incorporated an introductory exercise at the start that enables people to get to know each other?</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOCUS</td>
<td>RESPONSIBILITY</td>
<td>NOTES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who will facilitate each session of the workshop, record main ideas, observe, etc?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active learning experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there an emphasis on participants doing things rather than simply listening?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a variety of tasks – individual work, small-group work, reporting in plenary session, question and answer sessions, etc?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have task briefings been carefully considered?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are tasks demonstrably linked to workshop outcomes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have plans been made to ensure participants work in different groups so that they can get to know each other?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective close</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has the final activity been planned to facilitate the longer-term impact of the workshop on educational practice?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has a questionnaire been designed, including how well participants believed workshop outcomes were achieved?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afterwards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Who is to clean up?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has participants’ feedback been collected and analysed?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will participants receive after the workshop e.g. flipchart notes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you settled all accounts?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have incidental expenses borne by the project or organising teams been reimbursed?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example workshop outline to distribute to participants

2008 Fellowships Workshop:
BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS

When? – Monday 1 and Tuesday 2 September.
Where? – Royal on the Park, corner Alice and Albert Streets, Brisbane, QLD.

Overall Goals
• To build a community of ALTC Fellows.
• To explore how Fellows could foster scholarly teaching within Australian universities.

Specific outcomes:
For Fellows to:
• Identify challenges and opportunities that you face.
• Identify strategies whereby you might collaborate and network amongst each other to enrich your work and support each other in achieving individual Fellowship goals and aspirations.
• Develop strategies to foster both active reflection on teaching and research in learning and teaching: for example, through ownership of a set of ALTC guidelines on learning that inform teaching.
• Recommend an appropriate structure for maintaining and sustaining a community of Fellows.

For ALTC to:
• Identify how to support Fellows to collaborate together to promote and advance learning and teaching.
• Identify how ALTC might work with Fellows to establish a scholarly community in learning and teaching.
• Provide an opportunity for Fellows to share ideas, concerns, and solutions.

PROGRAM

Day One
10:00 – 10:10 Welcome: Professor Richard Johnstone
10:10 – 10:15 Overview of workshop aims and outcomes
10:15 – 11:00 Proud moments
11:00 – 11:40 Sharing goals (includes morning tea)
11:40 – 1:00 Challenges and opportunities
1:00 – 2:00 Lunch and informal conversation: Emeritus Professor John Hay AO
2:00 – 3:30 From Teaching to Learning: an idea and a proposal.
3:30 – 5:00 Working on Guidelines with invited students (includes afternoon tea)
5:00 – 5:30 Drinks (Fellows and students)
7:00 – 10:00 Dinner (venue TBC)

Day Two
9:00 – 9:15 Review of day on
9:15 – 10:00 Institutional change in learning and teaching: the need for systemic and embedded change
10:00 – 10:45 Discussion on creating an alumni of Fellows
10:45 – 11:00 Morning tea
11:00 – 12:30 Challenges and opportunities revisited
12:30 – 1:30 Lunch
1:30 – 3:00 Strategies to build the community of Fellows (including afternoon tea)
3:00 – 3:30 Where to from here? Dr Elizabeth McDonald. And, close of workshop
Example of facilitator’s detailed workshop program

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS

Who?

When?
From 10am Monday 1 September.
From 9am Tuesday 2 September.

Where?
Royal on the Park, Brisbane

Overall Goals
- Build a community of Fellows and explore how Fellows can foster scholarly teaching within Australian Higher Education

Specific Aims
For Fellows to:
- Reflect on challenges and opportunities that they face.
- Explore strategies for collaboration and networking amongst each other to enrich their work and support each other in achieving individual Fellowship goals and aspirations.
- Explore how Fellows could foster both active reflection on teaching and research in learning and teaching; for example through ownership of a set of ALTC guidelines on learning that inform teaching.
- Recommend an appropriate structure for maintaining and sustaining a community of Fellows.

Day 1
Tea/coffee/juice on arrival

10:00 am – 10:10 am Welcome: Professor Richard Johnstone

10:10 am – 10:15 am Overview of the workshop: aims and outcomes
(Comment that the generic term Fellows is being used throughout – Adrian Lee)

10:15 am – 11:00 am Proud moments activity (Adrian Lee)

i) Participants given an A3 sheet and asked to complete the following task:
A scene/description that depicts the teaching activity of which you are most proud and that best illustrates your approach to teaching and the student learning experience.

ii) Groups of three, who do not know each other, explain their teaching activities and decide on whether there is a common theme/principle behind the methods used.

iii) A3 sheets stuck on the wall and participants invited to review each other's work.

iv) Whole group asked to comment on any common themes/principles.

v) Michele to capture on flip chart headed ‘ALTC Fellows approaches to teaching and learning: Common themes’.

Purpose of session: To act as icebreaker and focus the session on learning.
Hopeful outcome: A fun and collaborative atmosphere with the generation of materials that will provide a good lead in to the Guidelines session.

11:00 am – 11:40 am  Sharing goals includes morning tea (Michele Scoufis)

Groups of three (different to first groups), who are not familiar with each others’ Fellowship proposals, are asked to introduce themselves and to share in relationship to their Fellowship:

- Key learning and teaching issues they are seeking to investigate/address and why?
- Major goals of their Fellowship (what they want to be different?).
- Activities of their Fellowship.
- Progress to date if possible.

(Fellows all have been asked to bring one page summary that focuses on the proposed outcomes of their Fellowship. Folder of all one pagers with contact details will be handed to the group at the conclusion of this session).

Handout Folder at the conclusion of this session.

Purpose of session: To reinforce the value of sharing issues and ideas with high level peers.

Hopeful outcome: To encourage formation of links that further build community.

11:40 am – 1:00 pm  The challenges and opportunities of ALTC Fellowships (Adrian Lee and Michele Scoufis)

Two groups of 11 formed in each end of the room, each with two 3M flip charts – Adrian/Michael, Michele.

Group task:

List the major problems/challenges and opportunities that you experience/or predict you will experience, in fulfilling your ALTC Fellowship aims and aspirations in learning and teaching.

Purpose of session: To identify issues and opportunities related to Fellowships that lay groundwork for support from ALTC and themselves.

Hopeful outcome: Provide basis for support to enhance the Fellowships.

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm  Lunch and informal conversation with Emeritus Professor John Hay

2:00 pm – 2:15 pm  Review of Nominal Group Priorities (Adrian Lee)

2:15 pm – 3:30 pm  From Teaching to Learning: An idea and a proposal (Adrian Lee)

Presentation on the ‘Guidelines on Learning’ by AL, including active participation of Fellows in pairs using the Guideline Toolkit.

Purpose of session: To explore how Fellows could foster active reflection on teaching and research in learning and teaching, eg through ownership of a set of ALTC guidelines on learning that inform teaching.
Hopeful outcome: To convince a group of Fellows to move to the next stage in production of ALTC Guidelines on learning and an associated website.

3:30 pm – 4:00 pm Afternoon tea (coincides with following session)

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm Working with the Guidelines (Michele Scoufis)

Sub-groups of three students with four Fellows work on one Guideline Toolkit task. Student task is to think of an example of an effective learning activity they have experienced that could be given as an example of that Guideline in action and record this on the sheet provided. Fellows also contribute an example from own teaching.

5:00 pm – 5:30 pm Drinks (Fellows and students)

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm Space allows shower break, etc.

7:00 pm – 10:00 pm Dinner, Brisbane riverside restaurant

Day 2

9:00 am – 9:15 am Review of Day 1 (Michele Scoufis)

9:15 am – 10:00 am Institutional change in learning and teaching: The need for systemic and embedded change (Adrian Lee)

Participants to suspend belief with respect to the value of a set of Guidelines and to address the following task:

Given the set of ‘Guidelines on Learning’ that informs teaching, how could they be used and embedded in the university’s processes such as they are and used to help the university focus on learning rather than teaching.

Plenary discussion to include presentation of examples of strategies that have been put in place at universities using ‘Guidelines on Learning’. At the conclusion of the session, there will be a request for individuals to nominate to join a group of fellows working with AL to explore this idea further.

Purpose of session: To generate ideas and to reinforce the need for systemic embedding in any initiative that aims to improve teaching in an institution.

Hopeful outcome: To further attract Fellows to usefulness of Guidelines concept and major role they could play in process to benefit of Australian HE.

10:00 am – 10:45 am Suggestions for acknowledging successful Fellowships and creating Alumni of Fellows (Elizabeth McDonald)

10:45 am – 11:00 am Coffee

11:00 am – 12:30 pm Challenges and Opportunities revisited: Solutions and Inspirations (Adrian Lee)

Five groups to work on the following tasks:
• Two subgroups work on solutions/strategies that address one of the top two problems/challenges identified in the Nominal group session.
• Two subgroups work on using one of the two top opportunities to maximise their impact (e.g. creating networks and collaborative processes).
• (Should there be a group of volunteers to take the ALTC Guidelines concept further, this group will have a first meeting with Adrian Lee).

Reporting back of one key suggestion:

Purpose of session: to generate ideas that can be acted upon.
Hopeful outcome: to give sense of being heard and a sense of empowerment.

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm  Lunch

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm  Other strategies for building community of ALTC Fellows so they can support quality teaching in Australian HE (Adrian Lee)

Three groups given the following task:

‘What other ways could you, as a community of ALTC Fellows, best contribute such that your skills, enthusiasm, and experience can impact on the Australian student experience?’

Each group asked to present their top three suggestions which are transcribed onto a general list.

Plenary group discussion on each idea with addition of positives and negatives next to each suggestion. Voting by show of hands on the ideas that are worth following further.

Purpose of session: To get group to seriously consider broader role they can play as a group.
Hopeful outcome: Identification of three or four possibilities for community activities.

2:30 pm – 3:00 pm  Other strategies for building the community of ALTC Fellows so that they can support quality teaching in Australian Universities (Adrian Lee)

Brainstorming with the whole group on the top 2-3 suggestions that the Fellows as a community identified in the previous session.

Purpose of session: To stimulate discussion on other activities as a lead in for the final session.
Hopeful outcome: To identify one or two other activities/contributions from the Fellows community.

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm  Where to from here? (Elizabeth McDonald). Evaluation of workshop

Purpose of session: To set an agenda that can be acted upon,
Hopeful outcome: That the group takes responsibility as a community.

3:30 pm  Close
Ideas for workshop activities

If you wish to generate ideas or solutions to problems:

**Listing**
Individuals and then smaller groups combine to generate lists on large Post-its, or A0 size paper, on a topic, e.g. elements of good and bad learning experiences from the perspective of the group.

TIP: don’t ask each group to feed back all that they have written; perhaps ask for their best idea. It is also good to put up these ideas around the room, so that you can return to them during the day – this also aids in ‘group memory’.

**Doing rounds**
Each person is asked to contribute one idea, with the option to pass if they don’t wish to contribute. Word limits (e.g. one word only) are critical!

**Buzz groups**
Members divide into smaller groups and discuss a topic or question. Limited time is allowed (five minutes for simple topic; ten for the more complex). You may (or may not) choose to ask groups to report one or two (maximum) key ideas that came out of the discussion.

**Snowball groups**
Similar to buzz groups, but members work in pairs in the first instance. Two pairs join as a group of four, share their findings and do further work as necessary. The groups of four then join up, and so on….

**Nominal Group Technique**
This is a great technique for ensuring that all voices are heard and recalled. Individuals work independently and silently on a problem. Each member then contributes their solution/idea without any evaluation although clarification is possible. Numbers are attached to each solution expressed and individually members rank the full list of ideas in terms of importance. Scoring of the number of ‘votes’ for each item results in a list of the groups top three ideas.

**Drawing**
Ask individual members to draw on A3 paper what an outcome or resource might look like. Then either ask each person to put their drawing on the wall or ask participants to explain their drawing to a colleague. This is a very powerful strategy for generating ideas.
Example of workshop evaluation form

Fellowships Workshop – 1 and 2 September 2008 Evaluation Form

Thank you for your participation in the ALTC Fellowship Workshop. We would appreciate your assistance in completing the following evaluation. Your feedback will assist us in the development of future similar events.

### Completing the Evaluation

Mark as appropriate: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral/Undecided, Agree or Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Outcomes</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral/Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The workshop enabled me to reflect upon the challenges and opportunities that I face as a Fellow.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I identified strategies for collaboration and networking with my colleagues that are likely to enrich my work and enable me to support other Fellows.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practical strategies were identified that will enable the Fellows to provide leadership of a Community of Scholars.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A potential structure for the maintenance and sustaining of the community of ALTC Alumni was recommended.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure &amp; Presentation</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral/Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There was adequate time for discussion and exchange.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>The workshop was logically structured.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitation supported achieving workshop outcomes.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral/Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location of venue and facilities were adequate.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room set up, audio and visual aids were appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALTC staff were helpful in resolving any issues.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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### Follow-up Action

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral/Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I intend to follow up with colleagues present today following the workshop.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes from the workshop will help contribute to the successful completion of my Fellowship.</td>
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<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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### Other Feedback

- What aspects of the workshop were most helpful?

- What aspects of the workshop were least helpful?

- What suggestions do you have for improvements in the event of future similar workshops for Fellows?

Thank you for providing feedback. Please pass the completed form to ALTC staff.
Reflecting on your workshop: some useful thoughts

When were participants most engaged during the workshop? Why was this? What have you learned from this?

What worked least well at this particular workshop? Why was this? How could this effect be minimized?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What was the best and worst aspect of the venue? What can be learned from this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the best thing about the actual participants at this workshop? How best can we try to make use of similar strengths among future participants?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What was the most difficult moment during the workshop? What can we learn from this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. References

ALTC projects referred to in this resource

Bridging gaps in music teacher education – www.musicteachersoz.org/project.htm
Developing multi-level leadership in use of student feedback to enhance student learning and teaching practice – http://emedia.rmit.edu.au/altcgp
Bioassess project – www.bioassess.edu.au/bioassess/go
ePortofolio project – www.eportfoliopractice.gut.edu.au
Teaching-Research Nexus (TRN) project – www.trnexus.edu.au
Promoting Teaching and Learning Communities: Institutional Leadership Project – http://leadershipcops.edu.au
Associate Professor Jacky Cranney, 2006 ALTC Associate Fellow - http://www.altc.edu.au/altc-associate-fellow-jacquelyn-cranney

Resources used


